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The Regional Civil-Military Operations Center:

A Force Multiplier in  
Military Operations Other Than War

By

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A paper submitted to the faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the department of [Joint Maritime Operations]

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

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## Abstract

America's National Security Strategy requires civil and military agencies to work together during complex contingency operations other than war. However, there are significant challenges in conducting these interagency dependent operations. Interagency bickering, mistrust between civil and military leaders and organizational shortfalls, are just a few.

These challenges can be overcome through leadership and organizational understanding provided by a regionally centered, civil- military operations center (RCMOC). The RCMOC will provide the impetus needed toward improving civil-military responses to contingency operations short of war and facilitate as a link between the NCA/JCS and the country team. The RCMOC will lay the foundation for efficient problem solving and consensus building among the various agencies when responding to a crisis and foster unity of effort among the various players involved in military operations other than war. Finally, through the establishment of a permanent RCMOC, that is tasked to conduct long term deliberate and crisis action planning, the NCA, CINC, JTF commander and the various NGOs and PVOs can anticipate, shape, and respond to a crisis better than current ad hoc responses have permitted. The RCMOC is a force multiplier; it is the one organization that can meld all the capabilities of the military, and the US governmental agencies, as well as NGOs and PVOs in this new era of complex contingency operations known as MOOTW.

## Contents

Report Documentation Page.....	i
Abstract.....	ii
Introduction.....	1
America's New Commitment.....	3
Challenges in Interagency Coordination and Planning...	4
Unity Through the Civil-Military Operations Center....	9
The Regional Civil-Military Operations Center.....	13
Conclusion.....	17

## Introduction

Military and political professionals are discovering that the post Cold War era is rife with more low level violence than anytime before. In fact, many regions throughout the globe are experiencing a rise in the amount of conflict, anarchy, famine, and devastation in the absence of the previously imposed bipolar constraints that were prevalent throughout the Cold War. As such, many countries within the Third World are beginning to implode.

As a result of the rise in regional low level conflict, there has been a renewed interest in the area known as Military Operations Other Than War (MOOTW). With this, the United States is more likely to commit resources abroad to protect American interests, maintain regional stability, and support the internal defense and development of threatened nations.

The MOOTW environment that we as military planners face today, is not new at all. Both Joint and Service unique doctrine has evolved over the years and continues to provide the Operational Commander with a sound and operational framework for operating in conflicts short of war. However, operations other than war pose unique considerations for the Commander in Chief (CINC) at the operational level.

Unlike war, military operations other than war focuses on deterrence, resolving conflict, promoting peace and

supporting civil authorities. Furthermore, the reasons for conducting and supporting operations other than war may vary. They can range from peace enforcement and counterinsurgency support to humanitarian assistance and counterdrug operations.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, the role and support that the Department of Defense and the CINC play in each of these missions may change. The military is often assigned a supporting role in both humanitarian and counterdrug operations. Conversely, they assume the lead role in a peace keeping and enforcement missions.<sup>2</sup>

In this new era of global commitment in military operations other than war, the CINC must increasingly rely on assets outside of military purview to accomplish his mission. These nontraditional assets that include government and non-government agencies alike reflect operational requirements as the CINC's mission extends outside traditional military bounds.

This paper addresses America's renewed commitment to military operations other than war, current challenges in organizational structure and its effect on interagency

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<sup>1</sup> The full spectrum of MOOTW includes: Arms Control, Combating Terrorism, Counterdrug Operations, Maritime Intercept Operations, Freedom of Navigation, Humanitarian Assistance, Counterinsurgency, Noncombatant Evacuations Ops, Peace Ops, Show of Force, Strikes and Raids, and Support to Insurgency.

<sup>2</sup> Joint Chiefs of Staff, JCS Pub 3-07: Joint Doctrine for Military Operations Other Than War (Washington, DC: 1995), p. I-2.

coordination, and provides a recommendation in developing an effective approach to planning that will synchronize the efforts of the military with all other elements of national power in a unified civil-military interagency plan.

### America's New Commitment

With the publication of Presidential Decision Directive 25 (PDD-25) in May of 1994 and the adoption of the "Lake Doctrine"<sup>3</sup> in March of 1996, America's policy on intervention and the relationship between political initiatives and the use of force in support of them has been redefined.<sup>4</sup> Both of these documents recognize that serious threats such as territorial disputes, armed ethnic conflicts, criminal activity, and humanitarian relief efforts will be predominant during the next decade. "While many of these threats and conflicts may not directly threaten American interests, their cumulative effects are significant."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> The Lake Doctrine replaced the Weinberger Doctrine in March of 1996. It outlines seven circumstances, which when taken in some combination or alone, may call for the use of force. They are: To defend against direct attack on the U.S., its citizens and allies. To counter aggression. To defend our key economic interests. To preserve, promote, and defend democracy. To prevent the spread of WMD, terrorism, crime, and drug trafficking. To maintain our reliability and enhance our allies confidence in American leadership. For humanitarian purposes, to combat famine, natural disaster, and abuse of human rights.

<sup>4</sup> Walter Clarke and Robert Gosende, "The Political Component: The Missing Vital Element in U.S. Intervention Planning", (Parameters, Autumn 1996) pp. 35-51.

<sup>5</sup> Presidential Decision Directive 25, The Clinton Administration's Policy on Reforming Multilateral Peace

Our current National Security Strategy further states that, "Our response to these threats is not limited exclusively to any one agency... National security, particularly in this era when domestic and foreign policies are increasingly blurred, crosses agency lines; thus, our approach places a premium on integrated interagency efforts to enhance U.S. security."<sup>6</sup> From this, it is evident that nearly every security undertaking in the future will require interagency teamwork to succeed. The problem we face today is that neither the CINCs of the various combatant commands or any national government agencies<sup>7</sup> are structured internally or empowered regionally to coordinate interagency activities in peacetime or crisis.<sup>8</sup>

### **Challenges in Interagency Coordination and Planning**

Operations other than war, like war itself, is governed by a set of basic principles.<sup>9</sup> As contingency operations

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Operations, (May 3, 1994) p. 1.

<sup>6</sup> William J. Clinton, A National Security Strategy for a New Century (Washington: The White House, May 1997), p. 6.

<sup>7</sup> Traditional government agencies which support MOOTW are; Department of State, United States Agency for International Development, Drug Enforcement Agency, Department of the Treasury, Department of Transportation, and, The Central Intelligence Agency. A detailed list of U.S. government agencies can be found in Joint Pub 3-08: Interagency Coordination During Joint Operations Vol. II.

<sup>8</sup> Thomas Gibbings, Donald Hurley and Scott Moore, "Interagency Operations Centers: An Opportunity We Can't Ignore", (Parameters, Winter 1999), p. 99.

<sup>9</sup> The principles of Operations Other Than War Are: Objective, Unity of Effort, Legitimacy, Perseverance,



become more complex and diverse, one of the most important principles and most difficult to achieve is unity of effort. The commander of U.S. Army Forces during Operation Support Hope, Lieutenant General Schroeder, experienced this first hand:

In Operation Support Hope, the U.S. military and the UN and the NGO community in-theater literally met on the dance floor. Given that a JTF commander's concern will be to ensure unity of effort (not command!), too brief a time to establish relationships can exacerbate the tensions that exist naturally between and among so many disparate agencies with their own internal agenda and outside sponsors.<sup>10</sup>

Unity of effort and coordination in this era of interagency dependence is difficult at best. This is especially so when planning requires government agencies to coordinate their activities with military bureaucracies and international volunteer organizations.<sup>11</sup> One reason for this, is that no one agency or organization is assigned the Restraint, and Security.

Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Pub 3-07: Joint Doctrine for Military Operations Other Than War (Washington, DC: 1995), pp. II-1-II-5.

<sup>10</sup> Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Pub 3-08: Interagency Coordination During Joint Operations Vol. I: (Washington, DC: 1996), p. III-1.

<sup>11</sup> Such as, Doctors without Borders, Care, and the International Red Cross. A detailed list of NGOs and PVOs can be found in Join Pub 3-08 Vol. II.

overall responsibility to plan and integrate interagency efforts or requirements into a comprehensive civil-military operations plan. Furthermore, the current interagency process rarely establishes a clear cut civil-military chain of command, and as a result, many organizations have competing agendas and programs. Consequently, planning and unity of effort is exacerbated by long standing rivalries and the mistrust that naturally exists between the military and the other dominant players involved.<sup>12</sup>

Besides organizational bickering, another reason why interagency unity and cooperation is difficult to achieve is that many of the U.S. agencies tasked to support MOOTW are not organized, staffed or funded to accomplish detailed planning and coordination at the operational level. Finally, membership in the interagency process is loosely organized and not fixed; thus, it tends to vary from crisis to crisis. Therefore, the members who make up these organizations tend to be inexperienced in crisis management and planning.<sup>13</sup> As a result, planning and execution of complex contingency operations have historically been disjointed and conducted through various ad hoc, short term, organizations and working groups.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Bruce R. Pirnie, Civilians and Soldiers: Achieving Better Coordination. (Washington DC: Rand, 1998), pp. 1-4.

<sup>13</sup> George T. Raach and Ilana Kass, "National Power and the Interagency Process", (Joint Forces Quarterly, Summer 1995) pp. 10-11.

<sup>14</sup> Mark L. Curry; The Interagency Process in Regional

Currently, interagency requirements flow from the national or strategic level, ad hoc, Interagency Working Group to the individual department and agencies and or country team tasked to fulfill them.<sup>15</sup> Unfortunately, the decisions made during this process are often "stove-piped." Consequently, many of these decisions tend to bypass the regional CINC who has the fundamental responsibility to provide military support and assistance to the various organizations that are tasked to achieve the strategic goals of the NCA.<sup>16</sup> This approach to interagency coordination has proven to be inadequate and has often led to misinterpretation of missions and misunderstanding between military and civilian planners in the past.

This lack of operational planning and coordination tended to affect interagency unity of effort during both Operation Restore Hope and Operation Restore Democracy.

During Operation Restore Hope, the U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance Team (OFDA) emphasized that the mistrust between that agency and the military, tended to dilute the overall Foreign Policy, (Alexandria, Va.: DTIC 1994) pp. 11-17.

<sup>15</sup> The country team comes under the purview of the U.S. Ambassador and is comprised of: political, economic and administrative counselors, and a military attaché, as well as directors from various governmental organizations such as USAID, USIA, DEA and the Peace Corps. However, none of the organizations within the country team are required to coordinate their efforts through the Ambassador. Each maintains a "stove piped" link back to their agency chief in Washington DC. Consequently, integrated coordination at this level can be difficult.

<sup>16</sup> Pirnie; p.3.

international relief strategy as well as OFDA's strategy. Moreover, planning was disjointed and the military often worked toward different self serving goals then those of the relief agencies which tended to delay the flow of relief supplies throughout the famished nation.<sup>17</sup> This led to the perception amongst many of the Governmental Organizations as well as many PVOs and NGOs that, "The military became preoccupied with protecting its troops, which some felt made concern for security an end in itself and deflected from the humanitarian priorities that were the original rationale for the intervention."<sup>18</sup>

Many of the same problems that occurred in Somalia also popped up during the planning and execution phases of Operation Uphold Democracy. According to a lessons learned working group, interagency planning was slow and compartmentalized, and lacked clear political guidance. Furthermore, while civilian agencies were developing a comprehensive political-military plan, they continued to disagree on a final and unified goal. Military planners on the other hand, found themselves preparing for the contingency without being able to talk to and coordinate

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<sup>17</sup> Carol C. Collins; Humanitarian Aid in Somalia: The Role of the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance, 1990-1994; (Washington DC, 1994) pp. 3-7.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid. P. 5

their efforts with their civilian counterparts in Washington DC, or with the country team in Haiti.<sup>19</sup>

While the military operation in Haiti itself was ultimately a success, there were a number of complications that occurred, largely because of inadequate interagency coordination. Several agencies arrived in Haiti expecting the military to provide them with a full range of support, such as food, shelter, transportation, and communications systems. Support, the military was unprepared to provide during the early stages of the operation. In many cases however, the Task Force commander was eventually able to meet some of these needs; but, the absence of interagency planning and coordination produced delays and over taxed the initial logistical and operational capabilities of the JTF.<sup>20</sup>

Fortunately, the absence of detailed operational planning and coordination during our involvement in Somalia and Haiti was offset by the establishment of a Civil-Military Operations Center.

#### **Unity through The Civil Military Operations Center**

In an attempt to unify the efforts of the various organizations and manage interagency affairs in Somalia and

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<sup>19</sup> Margaret Daly Hays and Gary F. Wheatley, ed, Interagency and Political-Military Dimensions of Peace Operations: Haiti--A Case Study (Washington: National Univ. Press, 1966), pp. 45-46.

<sup>20</sup> United States Atlantic Command (USACOM), Operation Uphold Democracy: U.S. Forces in Haiti (Norfolk, Va.: USACOM, 1997), p. 8.

Haiti, the respective Joint Task Force Commanders created a civil-military operations center (CMOC). In Somalia, the military was challenged to coordinate the activities of "49 different UN and humanitarian relief agencies; none of which were obligated to follow military directives."<sup>21</sup> As noted above, a number of these agencies tended to mistrust the military peace keepers and were initially reluctant to work with them. "Many relief workers saw military officers as inflexible, conservative and bureaucratic."<sup>22</sup> However, even with the mistrust and lack of interagency coordination during the planning and execution phases of the operation, the professionalism of the officers assigned to the CMOC was able to negate most civil-military prejudices and establish a working consensus between the key interagency players throughout Somalia. This in turn allowed the center to successfully focus their efforts to coordinate military support for the relief agencies, provide security, establish civil authority, and assist in delivering humanitarian assistance throughout the country.<sup>23</sup>

The CMOC met with equal success during Operation Uphold Democracy. During this operation, two CMOCs were established to coordinate the efforts of over 400 NGOs and Private

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<sup>21</sup> Kenneth Allard, Somalia Operations: Lessons Learned (Washington: National Defense Univ. Press, 1995), p. 23.

<sup>22</sup> Jonathan T. Dworken, "Restore Hope: Coordinating Relief Operations", (Joint Forces Quarterly, Summer 1995), p. 20.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., pp. 15-17.

Volunteer Organizations (PVO). However, just like Somalia, many governmental and humanitarian organizations were reluctant to work with the U.S. military. Furthermore, because many of these organizations were already in country before the arrival of U.S. forces, prior coordination could not be established. This in turn limited the military's ability to provide civic action and nation building assistance in support of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) team's efforts. A mission, that AID officials expected the military to assume when they arrived in country. Again, just as in Somalia, the absence of detailed operational coordination and planning was offset by the efforts of the CMOC and the personnel on the ground. Not only did the CMOC coordinate humanitarian relief missions, convoy and security operations in support of the numerous NGOs and PVOs operating within Haiti, they took the lead and effectively coordinated the efforts of both Army Civil Affairs and Special Operations Units in country to assist USAID and OFDA in their nation building efforts. A mission, U.S. Forces took over once it was discovered that neither agency had the assets or expertise in country to fulfill the vast number of political/institutional vacancies left by the deposed Haitian Government. As such, the CMOC worked intimately with both agencies and effectively assigned Army Reserve civil affairs officers to fill key billets throughout

the Haitian ministry to assist in getting the country back on its feet. And, they coordinated with U.S. Special Operations units who were assigned additional civil affairs and administrative duties throughout the countryside. A mission they performed until early 1996 when those duties were finally transferred to AID, OFDA, NGO and PVO personnel and contractors.<sup>24</sup>

Evidently, the CMOC has been an effective tool in providing the JTF commander with the ability to focus his efforts and to integrate military capabilities in support of political, humanitarian assistance, and relief efforts. Unfortunately, these centers are not normally established before a crisis and are staffed primarily with reservists.<sup>25</sup> Consequently, when a CMOC does deploy, its staff's experience and proficiency varies from crisis to crisis. Finally, these "just-in-time" organizations require considerable set up time to be effective and often deploy into a region without prior coordination with the U.S. Government agencies, NGOs, and PVOs they are earmarked to support.

### **The Regional Civil-Military Operations Center**

From this, it is clear to see that there is a need for a permanent organization or working group, with the mission

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<sup>24</sup> Hayes and Wheatley, pp. 49-57.

<sup>25</sup> The CMOC is normally staffed by Civil Affairs and PSYOP specialist. 80-95% of these specialists reside in the Reserve Establishment in both the Army and Marine Corps.



of actively pursuing interagency coordination at the operational level.<sup>26</sup> Our experiences in complex contingency operations such as Restore Hope and Uphold Democracy have proven this.

This requirement is also addressed in Presidential Decision Directive 56 (PDD-56), "The Clinton Administration's Policy on Managing Complex Contingency Operations." With the publication of this document, the NCA has come on board and recognizes the need for improved planning and coordination practices among U.S. Government agencies, DOD, and international organizations engaged in complex contingency operations.<sup>27</sup> It further states that, "effective management [leadership] and integrated planning of interagency operations early on, can avoid delays, reduce pressure on the military, and create a unity of effort that is essential for success of the mission."<sup>28</sup> Unfortunately, this directive falls short. Like our current doctrine, it does not appoint a lead agent or empower a centralized authority to coordinate interagency activities and requirements at the operational level.

A standing interagency operations center or working group that has been organized for some time, whose personnel

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<sup>26</sup> Gibbings, Hurley, & Moore; p. 105.

<sup>27</sup> Presidential Decision Directive 56. "The Clinton Administration's Policy on Managing Complex Contingency Operations". (Washington: 1997), pp. 1-3.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p.2.

have trained, and worked together, can overcome many of the interagency challenges that faced the JTF commanders in both Somalia and Haiti.<sup>29</sup> The ideal place for this cell to reside is within the headquarters of each regional combatant commander. The reason for this is threefold. First, the CINCs are the only organizations currently structured, equipped, and staffed to accommodate effective interagency planning. Second, the combatant commanders effectively command and control the majority of personnel, equipment and assets that are required to execute complex contingency operations short of war. Third, the DOD and the CINCs have established doctrine, and experience in planning and executing both joint and combined operations in war and operations other than war.

Once established, this cell, or Regional Civil-Military Operations Center (RCMOC), would be the NCAs and the CINCs focal point for regional interagency planning and coordination. The RCMOC would be tasked to review the Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan (JSCP), conduct deliberate and crisis action planning, and integrate the capabilities of all key interagency players in regionally focused contingency and functional plans. By planning in advance of a crisis, the operational commander can create a comprehensive plan to

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<sup>29</sup> Gibbings, Hurley, & Moore; p. 105.

allocate forces, sequence assets into a region and synchronize the efforts of both civil and military power.

Furthermore, the RCMOC headed by the CINC's Political Advisor (POLAD) can do much to foster the relationship between the military and the other key players within the arena of operations other than war. The RCMOC would work to overcome civil-military bias, develop trust among its participants and improve teamwork within the region. As Secretary of State Madeline Albright stated, "By melding the capabilities of the military and NGOs and PVOs you have developed a force multiplier."<sup>30</sup> Through the RCMOC the CINC can bridge the gap that currently exists between the military and their civilian counterparts. In fact, through regularly scheduled interaction, the center should improve overall communications and establish a higher level of trust and confidence between the military and the disparate civilian organizations throughout the region.

The composition and organization of a RCMOC would vary depending on region and necessity. However, it should at a minimum be authorized, staffed, structured, and equipped to:<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> JCS Pub 3-08: p. II-18.

<sup>31</sup> A recommended RCMOC should be headed up by the POLAD and comprised of representatives from the following staff sections: J2 (PSYOP, Counter Intel, CIA), J4, J5 (Civil Affairs and Future Ops) as well as representatives from other U.S. agencies, such as the DEA, USAID, DOJ, as required.

1. conduct centralized interagency planning within a region in an effort to develop a coordinated civil-military integration and implementation plan. (Even if future contingencies occurred in an unexpected place within a region, the information contained in this plan could easily be transferred to meet any unexpected crisis within a CINCs area of responsibility.)

2. review the JSCP and update current contingency and functional plans.

3. assist the Ambassador and Country Team in establishing a comprehensive and effective Emergency Action Plan.

4. establish an interagency mobile training team to educate U.S. Governmental organizations, NGOs and PVOs on the capabilities and contributions the military can provide in support of their efforts.

5. improve regional civil-military interagency readiness and capabilities through training and regularly scheduled exercises.

6. function as an initial interagency coordination assessment team for a country team and/or a JTF commander early on in an operation to assess interagency requirements.

7. establish a temporary RCMOC in theater to coordinate interagency efforts until the JTF CMOC is fully functional.

The RCMOC will go a long way in improving interagency coordination and establishing unity of effort during complex contingencies short of war. It will also comply with the intent of PDD-56 and Joint Pub 3-08 that recognize that both military and civilian agencies must be continuously engaged in interagency coordination long before crisis action is required.<sup>32</sup> It is through this coordination that the CINC and the agencies involved in MOOTW can develop a unified civil-military implementation plan that considers the ways, means, and risks involved in achieving their strategic objective.

### Conclusions

America's National Security Strategy requires civil and military agencies to work together during complex contingency operations other than war. As discussed, there are significant challenges in conducting these interagency dependent operations. However, many of these challenges can be overcome through leadership and organizational understanding provided by a regionally centered, civil-military operations center.

Therefore, it only makes sense for the NCA and the Joint Chiefs of Staff to task U.S. Regional Commanders in Chief to take the lead in establishing a Regional Civil-Military

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<sup>32</sup> JCS Pub 3-08: p. III-6.

Operations Centers within their command. The RCMOC will provide the impetus needed toward improving civil-military responses to contingency operations short of war and facilitate as a link between the NCA/JCS and the country team. It will also lay the foundation for quicker and more efficient problem solving and consensus building among the various agencies when responding to a crisis. Finally, through the establishment of a permanent RCMOC, that is tasked to conduct long term deliberate and crisis action planning, the NCA, CINC, JTF commander and the various NGOs and PVOs can anticipate, shape, and respond to a crisis better than current system has permitted. The RCMOC is a force multiplier; it is the one organization that can unite all the capabilities of the military, U.S. Governmental agencies, as well as NGOs and PVOs in this new era of complex contingency operations known as MOOTW.

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